
LESSON 4

COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

I believe that the task of bringing the force to the fighting point, properly equipped and well-formed in all that it needs is at least as important as the capable leading of the force in the fight itself...In fact it is indispensable and the combat between hostile forces is more in the preparation than the fight.

--General Sir John Monash, (1865-1931)

The Commanders, 1984

It is very necessary to attend to all this detail and to trace a biscuit from Lisbon into a man's mouth on the frontier and to provide for its removal from place to place by land or by water, or no military operations can be carried out.

--The Duke of Wellington, 1811

An adequate supply system and stocks of weapons, petrol and ammunition are essential conditions for any army to be able to stand successfully the strain of battle. Before the fighting proper, the battle is fought and decided by the Quartermasters.

--Field Marshal Erwin Rommel
Soldiers and Soldiering, 1953

Introduction

Purpose

This lesson

wProvides the basic concepts of how the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) plans and conducts combat service support (CSS) operations

wExplains how these concepts influence employment of the MAGTF in joint and combined operations

Continued on next page

Introduction, Continued

**Why Study
CSS
Operations?**

There is an old military adage that while armchair generals focus on tactics, real generals worry about logistics. It does little good to know how to fight if a commander lacks the tools to do so when the time for battle arrives. History is replete with examples of military operations that have failed, not due to poor tactics, but because of inadequate combat service support.

It is essential that you are knowledgeable about the organization, capabilities, and limitations of CSS element (CSSE) and the role it plays in MEF operations.

**Relationship
to Other
Instruction**

This lesson provides the basic concepts of how the MAGTF plans and conducts combat service support operations and how CSS influences employment of the MAGTF in joint and combined operations. It builds on previous lessons in this course and is further developed in Lesson 5, "Rear Area Operations," and again in *Operations Other Than War (OOTW)* (8809).

Study Time

This lesson, including the issues for consideration, will require approximately 3.5 hours of study.

Educational Objectives

Logistics vs. CSS Describe the difference between logistics and combat service support.

Core Logistics Capabilities Describe what core logistics capabilities Marine Forces must provide at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. [JPME 2(d), 3(a), and 3(c)]

Logistics Planning Describe the levels and primary characteristics of logistics planning.

CSS Organizations Describe the permanent CSS organizations in the MEF and the most common task organizations derived from them for operations.

CSS Operations' Impact Comprehend the impact of logistics and CSS on Marine Forces in Operations *Desert Shield* and *Desert Storm*.

**JPME Areas/
Objectives/Hours
(accounting data)** 2/d/0.5
3/a/0.5
3/c/0.5

Discussion

The Challenge Projecting and sustaining U.S. military power abroad is an increasingly difficult and important challenge. At the operational level, forces which can be tailored to meet a specific situation, while being rapidly deployed and indefinitely sustained, provide the combatant commander with leverage and flexibility in responding to a crisis.

Importance of CSSE w Greater mechanization, increasingly sophisticated weapons systems, and a more rapid operational tempo requires modern military forces to be even more dependent on sinews of war than have been armies in the past. In recognition of this need for effective combat service support, one part of MAGTF is always a robust Combat Service Support Element (CSSE).

wAt the MEF level, the CSSE is one or more Force Service Support Groups (FSSG). To be effective in combat, all elements of the MEF need to work in unison toward the commander's main effort. The CSSE is every bit as important to the process as either the command or combat elements of the MEF. No matter what course the commander takes, it will be the CSSE that provides the means to sustain the rest of the force.

CSS Operations Effective CSS is a prerequisite for all MEF operations. All elements of the MEF support their component which may be designated as the MEF commander's main effort. Should either the Ground Combat Element (GCE) or Aviation Combat Element (ACE) be designated the main effort, the CSSE will ensure the main effort receives priority support, but must still sustain the rest of the force as well.

Focus of Main Effort The CSSE is sometimes considered the MEF commander's focus of main effort. The readings in this lesson show you the logistics/movement and sustainment plan performed in I MEF during Operations *Desert Shield* and *Desert Storm* where, during *DESERT SHIELD*, the forward displacement of CSS assets was the MEF commander's main effort. You will want to consider which element of the MAGTF might be the focus of effort in OOTW, such as humanitarian operations or disaster relief--where CSS operations are essential.

Continued on next page

Discussion, Continued

CSS Operations Throughout the Battlespace

CSS operations are not synonymous with rear area operations. CSS operations occur throughout the battlespace (deep, close, and rear).

wThe resupply of forward reconnaissance assets, the support of light armored vehicle (LAV) or armor units striking deep, or the forward arming and refueling operations of the ACE beyond the Forward Line of Troops all occur in the "deep" battlespace.

w Mobile CSS detachments and forward based logistics all operate in the "close" battlespace.

w CSS operations certainly occur in the rear area where the MEF's connection to the sustainment base probably resides.

As you study the readings for this lesson, pay attention to the spectrum of space and activities in which CSS operations play a role.

Task-Organized CSS

The MEF's CSS organizations that are task-organized are

- wCombat Service Support Detachment (CSSD)
 - wMEU Service Support Group (MSSG)
 - wCombat Service Support Element (CSSE)
 - wForce Service Support Group (FSSG) (Forward)
 - wLanding Force Support Party (LFSP)
-

Permanent CSS Organizations

The MEF's CSS organizations that are permanent are

- wForce Service Support Group (FSSG)
 - wMarine Wing Support Group (MWSG)
 - wMarine Aviation Logistics Squadron (MALS)
-

Continued on next page

Discussion, Continued

MWSG

The Marine Wing Support Group (MWSG)

wProvides general support to the ACE's

wExpeditionary airfield

wAircraft refueling

wAirfield transportation

wGeneral engineering

wProvides Marine Wing Support Squadron (MWSS) in direct support to each Marine Aircraft Group (MAG)

wRequires augmentation from FSSG

MALS

Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron (MALS)

wProvides core intermediate-level, aviation-peculiar combat service support

wIs augmented by appropriately-sized support package

wIs capable of sea-based maintenance using T-AVB, an aviation logistical support ship

Special CSS Task Organizations

Special CSS task organizations

wProvide support beyond organic capabilities

wHave assets tailored to supported unit requirements

wMobility

wSupply

wMaintenance

wPerform quantitative and qualitative support

wRespond to supported unit

Continued on next page

Discussion, Continued

Missions

Task organizations and their missions are as follows:

Task Organization	Mission
FSSG (Fwd) or Combat Service Support Group (CSSG)	CSS to MEF (Fwd)
MSSG	CSSE of the Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU (SOC))
CSSD	CSS to MAGTF (normally battalion/squadron size or smaller)
MCSSD	Mobile CSSD
LFSP	Landing Force Support Party

Required Readings

***FM/FMFRP
Readings***

FMFRP 1-11, *Fleet Marine Force Organization 1992*, pp. 5-27 to 5-28 and 5-37 to 5-39. Find this reading in the *FM/FMFRP Readings* (8800), pp. 91 to 129. This reading outlines the concepts of employment and organization of the MAG and squadron, as well as their CSS and logistics capabilities.

***MCDP 4,
Logistics***

MCDP 4, *Logistics*, Chapter 3, pp. 81 to 115. Chapter 3, "Creating Effective Logistics," discusses the characteristics of effective logistics and how to incorporate them into the force.

***FMFM
Readings***

FMFM 4-1, *Combat Service Support*, pp. 1-1 to 1-3. Find this reading in the *FMFM Readings* (8800), pp. 243 to 245. This reading provides the fundamentals of CSS operations and the levels of logistical support.

***MAGTF
Operations
Readings***

wKrulak, C., BGEN. "CSS in the Desert." *Marine Corps Gazette*, pp. E-8 through E-11. Find this reading in the *MAGTF Operations Readings*, Annex C, pp. C-3 to C-6. This article shows how the Direct Support Command successfully moved its CSS closer to the Kuwaiti border. The new supply position enabled the I Marine Expeditionary Force to conduct a two-division breach of the border instead of the one division breach that had previously been considered the only option.

wO'Donovan, J., LtCol. "Combat Service Support During DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM: From Kibrit to Kuwait." *Marine Corps Gazette*, pp. E-2 through E-7. Find this reading in the *MAGTF Operations Readings*, Annex C, pp. C-7 to C-12. This article provides an accounting of the CSSEs that supported GCE and ACE during Operations *Desert Shield* and *Desert Storm*.

For Further Study

Supplemental Readings

The following readings are **not** required. They are provided as recommended sources of additional information about topics in this lesson that may interest you. They will increase your knowledge and augment your understanding of this lesson.

wJoint Pub 4-0, *Doctrine for Logistics Support of Joint Operations*.

wNDP 4, *Naval Logistics*.

wFMFM 4-1, *Combat Service Support Operations*.

wJackson, John E. *Logistics in the National Defense*. Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press, 1997.

wVanCreveld, Martin. *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

wLynn, John A., ed. *Feeding Mars: Logistics in Western Warfare from the Middle Ages to the Present*. Boulder, San Francisco, and Oxford: Westview Press, 1993.

Issues for Consideration

Logistics and CSS	What is the difference between logistics and CSS?
Core Logistics Capabilities	What core logistics capabilities do Marine Forces provide at the strategic level of war? At the operational level of war? At the tactical level of war?
Logistics Planning	What are the three levels of logistic planning? What are the three primary characteristics of logistic planning?
CSS Organizations	What are the MEF's permanent CSS organizations and what are the most common task organizations derived from them for operations?
Impact of Special CSS Task Organizations	What were the special CSS task organizations used by I MEF during Operations <i>Desert Shield</i> and <i>Desert Storm</i> ? What impact did CSS have on Marine Forces in Operations <i>Desert Shield</i> and <i>Desert Storm</i> ?
